## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Metadata pertaining to real data stored in at least one database (DB) are collected and managed at a single meta DB server, and metadata that match a retrieval request are extracted by search of the meta DB server. Even when a plurality of DBs and DB servers for managing DBs are present on a network, all metadata that match the retrieval request can be extracted independently of the DBs that the metadata pertain to. Hence, all data that match a retrieval request can be obtained from a single server, independently of the actual locations of the distributed DBs and DB servers.